

MINUTES
10x10 Blue Ribbon Affordable Housing Meeting
Tuesday December 19, 2006, 4:00 p.m.
Fresno City Hall 4th Floor, Meeting Room 2125

Committee Members Present: Cynthia Sterling, Fresno City Council District 3 (Co-Chair)
Keith Bergthold, City of Fresno (Chair)
Michael Sigala, City of Fresno
Lee Brand, Westco
Jess Negrete, Central California Legal Services
Rev. Sharon Stanley, FIRM
Ned Stacy
Dennis Woods, United Security Bank
Sara Hedgpeth-Harris, League of Woman Voters
Veda Ramsay, The Ramsay Group

Special Guests: Mayor Alan Autry
Deputy City Mayor Roger Montero

Others Present: Bonnie Rusko, Universal Design Committee, and
Subcommittee Code Enforcement
Rollie Smith, HUD
Mary Moore
Kevin D. Hamilton
Rev. Sophia Dewitt
Charlotte Hylton, Deputy City Attorney
Nora DeWitt
John Giannetta, City of Fresno, Code Enforcement
Katerina Holland
Bill Ross, City of Fresno
Howard Lacy, City of Fresno
David Jennings, City of Fresno
Karen Markland, Department of Health
Ruben Diaz, City of Fresno Code Enforcement
Blong Xiong, Council Member Elect
Rhonda Jorn, City of Fresno
Steve Ratzlaff
Matt Jendian

Members Absent: Robert Wood, Generation Homes
Dan Fitzpatrick, Lantana Investment, LLC
Paul Werfelmann, Hope Lutheran Church

A. Call to Order

Meeting was called to order at 4:20 p.m. by Council Member Sterling, Co-Chair

B. Introductions

Attendees introduced themselves. Keith Bergthold introduced the 10 X 10 Blue Ribbon Committee to the Mayor. Keith Bergthold stated that the committee was a serious group

that is committed to fulfill the goal of achieving 10,000 affordable and accessible homes by the year 2010.

C. Presentation of Preliminary Report to Mayor Alan Autry

1. New Financing Strategies:

Veda Stamps presented New Financing objective creating an affordable Housing Trust Fund. The City has set aside \$500,000 to put in an Affordable Housing Trust Fund. A Housing Trust Fund Ordinance must be drafted with community involvement. The Planning and Development Department will administer the trust fund. \$50,000 of the \$500,000 is proposed to use to determine how to create an ordinance, organize the trust fund and who is eligible for the funds.

Veda Stamps said that she surveyed 10 developers on what the barriers are in developing affordable housing projects. The barriers consisted of expensive land, lengthy approval process and prevailing wages.

Dennis Woods said that to reach the goal of 10,000 affordable and accessible homes, the private sector must be utilized. Recent legislation allows governments to deposit up to 30 million dollars in one federally insured financial institution. In ten years, the 30 million dollar deposit could earn over 28 million dollars. The deposits would only go into banks that would finance affordable housing projects. The money could also help non-profit developers build affordable housing. Mayor Alan Autry stated that his office has begun to research the financial strategy plan that Dennis Woods presented.

2. Innovative Government:

Jess Negrete stated that cumbersome rules and regulations are significant barriers to affordable housing projects. Zoning laws, such as density requirement need to be revamped to meet the needs of affordable housing projects. Appointing a “Shepherd” to an affordable housing project will speed up the approval process and provide an advocate for the project, when stalled in the development process. A delay in the approval process can be expensive for an affordable housing project. Creating the Application Business Center would shorten the development process for affordable housing projects.

3. Urban Reinvestment:

Sara Hedgpeth-Harris said that there should be a marketing approach to developing Infill properties. The first step to marketing infill properties is to inventory all the infill properties in the City. Once the City has an inventory of the properties, a blanket approach to marketing of the property can occur. Sara Hedgpeth-Harris stated that a marketing package can be put together for vacant buildings in need of renovation. A biography of inventoried buildings can go to the developer so that they can determine what the building needs. An expert should be appointed to infill development to help it through the approval process.

Sara Hedgpeth-Harris stated that there is a great need for transitional housing. Transitional Housing is for people who fall below 30% of the area median

income. One of the goals of the subcommittee is to form partnerships with other public and private organizations to leverage government funding for transitional housing. There is a great housing need for homeless families, Transitional Age Youth, and housing for families that need Permanent Supportive Care.

Sara Hedgpeth-Harris stated that El Dorado Park could be an example of a model urban renewal project. The area is in the process of trying to be recognized as a RDA area. At this time this subcommittee is going through a visionary process with various community organizations to see how to improve the area.

4. Innovative Code Enforcement:

Reverend Sharon Stanley stated that there are 26 people who are involved in this subcommittee. This subcommittee has nine different recommendations. One recommendation is to create real property ordinances and receiverships to have owners to fix their substandard properties. Another recommendation is to have three City Attorneys dedicated to code enforcement. Another goal is to educate tenants regarding their rights. The problem is that tenants hesitate to report substandard conditions because they have a fear of reprisals. That is why there should be “just cause” eviction laws and relocation plan if a tenant is displaced due to substandard housing. Rev Sharon Stanley stated that because the Central Valley is so hot, there needs to be a local ordinance that requires owners to have adequate cooling systems on their properties.

5. Accessible Housing:

Michael Sigala said the City has launched the Disabled Accessibility Grant Program and is currently receiving applicants for the program. At this time, the City is developing a “Universal Design” policy that would require all new residential units to be constructed with basic universal design features. An example of Universal Design features are; no-step entry, one downstairs accessible bathroom and bedroom, wider hallways, and lever door handles. If the City of Fresno adopts a Universal Design Ordinance, it would be one of the first cities to have such an ordinance.

6. Regional partnerships:

Rollie Smith said that the 10 X 10 is participating in the Valley Regional Housing Strategy. The Valley Regional Trust is pursuing a San Joaquin Valley Regional Housing Trust. Rollie Smith said that if the region applies as a group, they would have better access to 1C funds. Rollie Smith said that the 10 X 10 Blue Ribbon Committee will be a leader for the Regional Housing Trust. Rollie Smith said that the Valley Regional Housing Strategy is also looking at regulatory reform and issues concerning prevailing wage.

7. Smart Growth Implementation:

Keith Bergthold said that the City of Fresno is launching 9,000 acres of planning in the southeast growth area which may house an estimated 50,000 people. In order to have a viable growth area, we need to hire a world class planner to plan the growth of the area.

D. Public Comments and Announcements:

Keith Bergthold said that the 10 X 10 Blue Ribbon Committee needs 45-60 days to implement these changes. He reiterated that Jon Ruiz has made a commitment to work with City departments to implement the proposed changes.

Mayor Alan Autry thanked the 10 X 10 for its preliminary report and said that he believed that we are coming closer to our goals. These policies will make or break this City because everyone wants a home.

Mayor Autry stated that he is ready to consider any policy regarding accessibility and Universal Design. In regards to prevailing wage, everyone can identify areas that need relief from the wage requirement.

Mayor Autry stated that he is pushing to have a summit on Regionalism and wants the Housing Alliance to have a significant role in the summit. Mayor Autry stated there is never going have enough affordable housing unless you have many houses built.

Council Member Sterling stated that we must make it a priority to apply for the proposition money that is available. Council Member Sterling stated that only 18% of City residents can afford to buy a house in Fresno.

Mayor Autry stated that development should not be environmentally reckless. Lee Brand said the private sector needs incentives to build affordable housing. Veda Stamps said that she is concerned about over building, especially if people cannot afford to buy the homes. Mayor Autry acknowledged the concern and stated that we need smart planning. Rollie Smith stated that we needed to know where to build theses homes. We have to urbanize rather than suburbanize.

The 10 X 10 committee decided to meet after the Holidays. The next meeting is January 4, 2006.

Meeting Adjourned 5:45 p.m.